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MORAL MOTIVATIONS: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-  
REGULATION AND MORALITY

A Thesis Presented

by

SANA SHEIKH

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment  
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Social Psychology

MORAL MOTIVATIONS: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-  
REGULATION AND MORALITY

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## ABSTRACT

### MORAL MOTIVATIONS: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF- REGULATION AND MORALITY

SEPTEMBER 2007

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This research introduces an attempt to regard morality from a motivational perspective by conceptualizing the moral realm in terms of approach-avoidance motivation. The study used a situational priming measure and dispositional measures to investigate the impact of approach-avoidance motivation on moral judgments. A secondary objective was to explore the relationship between conceptions of morality and perceived personal preference. Despite the failure of the priming measure, dispositional activation predicted moral judgments of approach-oriented behaviors, which were, overall, viewed as more a matter of personal preference. Dispositional inhibition predicted moral judgments of avoidance-oriented behaviors, which were, overall, judged more harshly and were associated with perceptions of personal preference. The findings concerning the differences between approach and avoidance moral motivations provide support for the role of self-regulation in an individual's moral system.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The study of morality has had an extensive history in various disciplines; schools of philosophy have studied it descriptively and normatively, evolutionary psychology has attempted to explain specific moral behavior in terms of natural selection, and political science has studied the influence of moral codes on political ideology. Indeed, morality plays a central role in events ranging from an individual's daily life to major political and global events, thus warranting the attention of many academic disciplines. In spite of this notable interest in the subject of morality, one fundamental question has yet to be answered—what motivates us to hold the morals that we hold? Historically, psychology has attempted to explicate an individual's motivation to hold certain morals as part of a broader theory (e.g., Freud's conception of the superego in his formulation of psychoanalytic thought), but none have specifically fleshed out the nature of morality in relation to the individual. The following aims to understand the role of self-regulation in morality in an attempt to better conceptualize an individual's moral worldview.

#### The Study of Morality in Psychology

A consideration of the nature of morality, however brief it may be, is necessary to obtain an adequate understanding of the motivations underlying an individual's moral system. For the purposes of this paper, morality will be defined as a set of rules that facilitate group living (see e.g., DeWaal, 2006; Haidt & Joseph, 2004; Janoff-Bulman & Sheikh, 2006). Durkheim (1965), for example, has conceptualized the function of morality as regulating societal order, and De Waal

(1996) has argued for casting morality in terms of how one *should* or *should not* behave as valued members of society. With this, we can further understand the psychological processes that relate to morality.

Psychological research on morality in past decades has focused almost exclusively on moral rationality, as represented by the work of Kohlberg (1981, 1984), which has largely defined and appropriated the field of moral psychology. Kohlberg (1984) viewed moral development as paralleling cognitive development (see Piaget, 1977), where the child *rationally* constructs his or her moral worldview through a series of stages that lead to a universally held moral system valuing justice and behaviors.

Recently, however, a number of psychologists have begun to look more broadly at morality, and in particular at what we mean when we speak of a moral person or moral exemplars (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Campbell & Christopher, 1996; Walker & Pitts, 1998; Walker & Hennig, 2004). Recent work in this area suggests that an individual's morality is more than a rationally developed set of rules regarding prosocial behaviors. Cultural psychologists (e.g., Miller, Bersoff, & Harwood, 1990; Shweder, 1991a; Shweder, Mahapatra, & Miller, 1987; Shweder & Sullivan, 1993) have argued that the domain of morality is distinct across cultures, and that it oftentimes extends past harm, rights, and justice. Haidt (1993), for example, has shown that offensive violations of social norms, that are in fact harmless, often elicit moral reactions; his social intuitionist model of moral judgment (Haidt, 2001) also asserts that moral judgment is first an affective phenomenon, while cognition is secondary, coming into play only as a post hoc justification of the affective reaction.

### An Argument for Self-Regulation

A first step towards conceptualizing morality in terms of motivation is starting with an established theoretical framework. An essential distinction in motivation is that between approach and avoidance tendencies; in approach motivation, behavior is directed by a positive or desirable event or outcome, whereas in avoidance motivation, behavior is directed by a negative or undesirable event or outcome (Elliot, 1999). This distinction dates back to the work on ethical hedonism by ancient Greek philosophers Democritus (460-370 B.C.) and Aristippus (430-360 B.C.; see also Epicurus, 342-270 B.C.). It has an especially rich history in psychology; most influential motivational theories have incorporated approach-avoidance concepts in some manner (for more on the history of the approach-avoidance distinction, see Elliot, 1999).

In recent years, theoretical interest in the approach-avoidance distinction has extended to diverse areas of the field. Work on achievement (e.g., Atkinson, 1964; Elliott & Church, 1997; McClelland, Atkinson, Clarke, & Lowell, 1953), interpersonal relations (e.g., Impett, Gable, & Peplau, 2005), personality types (e.g., Elliot & Thrash, 2002; Emmons, 1996; Markus & Nurius, 1986), bio-physiology (e.g., Gray, 1982, 1990), and the “feared self,” personal strivings, and subjective well-being (Emmons, 1996; Markus & Nurius, 1986) all make the distinction between approach and avoidance. Carver & Scheier’s (1998) influential work on self-regulation and cybernetics and animal learning-biological models, too, have underscored the fundamental distinction between approaching a desired end-state and avoiding an undesired end-state, often framing these differences in terms of appetitive

versus inhibitive goals (e.g., Gray, 1982, 1990; Konorski, 1967). Another line of research regarding approach versus avoidance systems is Higgins' (e.g., 1997, 1998) work on regulatory focus. Higgins distinguishes between two different regulatory foci that are analogous to the approach and avoid orientations--promotion and prevention. Both involve maximizing pleasure over pain. Whereas a promotion focus seeks to maximize the presence of positive outcomes, a prevention focus seeks to maximize the absence of negative outcomes. Higgins (1997, 1998) proposes that these differences arise largely from different parenting styles that essentially sensitize the child to positive or negative outcomes. A promotion focus follows from a parental emphasis on the child's advancement and growth, whereas a prevention focus follows from a parental emphasis on safety and protection. Although Higgins' conception of the distinct needs tied to each regulatory focus is likely to have important implications for understanding the needs our morals satisfy and the motivations underlying our moral appraisals, he nevertheless regards only the prevention system, but not the promotion system, as engaged with morality or oughts (Higgins, 1998). Recent research on the motivational distinction within the moral domain provides some evidence against Higgins' claim (see Janoff-Bulman, Sheikh, & Baldacci, 2007); ultimately, however, promotion and prevention regulatory foci seem to reflect differences in approach versus avoidance motivation (e.g. Elliot, 1999).

These distinctions between approach versus avoidance orientations, appetitive versus inhibitive goals, and promotion versus prevention regulatory foci suggest the fundamental importance of differential sensitivities to positive versus negative outcomes. These two motivations echo the two primary motives underlying parental

responsibility: protecting the child from danger and providing the child with the means to survive (e.g., food, contact comfort). The former is associated with the child's security needs and the latter with the child's nurturance needs (see Bowlby, 1969, on attachment; also see Higgins, 1997). Overall, the two distinct modes of self-regulation--approach and avoid--provide a new way to conceptualize morality in terms of an individual's basic motivation.

#### Approach and Avoidance: Situational and Dispositional

The approach-avoidance distinction has been studied as a personality variable and as a situational variable. Elliot and Thrash (2002) regards approach and avoidance motivations as stable temperaments and argues that the two temperaments represent the foundation of several different approaches to personality. Specifically, they have found that the measures of extraversion and neuroticism (Costa & McCrae, 1992), positive and negative emotionality (Watson & Clark, 1993), and the Behavioral Activation System and the Behavioral Inhibition System (Carver & White, 1994) all have underlying approach versus avoidance components. In this respect, the two distinct modes of self-regulation are stable temperaments by which an individual may have a predisposed sensitivity to either motivation, which would carry across situations.

Alternatively, another method of studying the approach-avoidance distinction regards either motivation as activated by the situation. In addition to priming techniques used by Higgins (e.g., 1998), Friedman and Förster (2001) have primed individuals with either approach or avoidance motivation using a maze task that activates "seeking reward" or "avoiding punishment" respectively. It is important to

note that there can also be an interaction between an individual's predisposed approach-avoidance sensitivity and situational activation of either approach or avoidance motivation.

### Moral Motivations: The Role of Self-Regulation in Morality

The focus of this section is relating the self-regulation literature, in particular the distinction between approach motivation and avoidance motivation, to morality. Here, moral motivations are directed at behaviors that approach positive outcomes and behaviors that avoid negative outcomes. Positive outcomes in the moral domain are those moral behaviors that one *should* do whereas negative outcomes in the moral domain are immoral behaviors that one *should not* do. A key to the self-regulatory, motivational distinction within morality is the *activation* of positive, moral behaviors--doing what is moral, versus the *inhibition* of negative, immoral behaviors-- not doing what is immoral (Janoff-Bulman & Sheikh, 2006).

Applying the approach-avoidance self-regulatory distinction with a self-versus other-distinction, we arrive at a 2 X 2 model of moral motives with four cells that we have labeled: Self-Restraint, Self-Reliance, Social Order, and Social Justice (see Figure 1). Each reflects a cluster of morals sensitive to a specific self-regulation orientation in which the avoidance and the approach motivations respectively work in the moral domain.

Self-Restraint and Self-Reliance reflect the differences between the self-regulation orientations of activation and inhibition in the domain of personal responsibility, whereas Social Order and Social Justice represent these regulatory orientations in the realm of social responsibility. Relating back to the dispositional

versus situational aspect of self-regulation, although all four motives are likely to be represented to some extent in an individual's moral system, our unique socialization histories and life experiences are apt to create a greater focus on one or more motives for any given individual.

The Self-Restraint motive can best be understood in terms of general self-protection, and in particular, self-control and restraint in the face of threatening temptations. This is the realm of most of our popularized “seven deadly sins,” for it is personal control in the face of these undesirable behaviors that is believed to protect an individual. Within this moral domain, the focus is on negative outcomes and the appropriate response is restraint and inhibition; giving in, personal indulgence, and weakness are to be avoided through strength of character.

Self-Reliance is essentially a matter of providing for the self; the focus is on one's own advancement and achievement—positive outcomes—and involves a willingness to depend on the self as well as a sense of personal industry. This domain reflects beliefs in personal autonomy and is closest to our understanding of the Protestant work ethic, with its focus on working hard to get ahead. Both Self-Restraint and Self-Reliance entail forms of discipline; neither involves a lax orientation towards the self. These behaviors take on a moral quality, meaning that an individual will not freeload and unnecessarily take advantage of the group; however, it is important to emphasize that Self-Restraint focuses on what we should not do and inhibitory behaviors, whereas Self-Reliance focuses on what we should do and activation behaviors.



In the social responsibility domain, the Social Order motive involves the application of restraint motives to other people, particularly one's larger community. Given that the focus is on preventing and avoiding dangers in the moral realm, this protect-based, social responsibility orientation involves the desire to restrain and control others' behaviors in effort to maximize a sense of security through homogeneity and conformity. Attunement to negative outcomes creates a need for explicit boundaries for right and wrong, and for knowing what is not permitted or acceptable so that it can be avoided and dangerous consequences averted. To some extent virtually all members of a community invoke Social Order, for we have societal rules all are expected to follow (e.g., criminal law). Given that this protect motive addresses security needs, it typically responds to threats to the safety of the group; thus the regulatory strategy involves restraint and control of the group as a means to avoid harm or danger. Individuals with a Social Order motive do not expect to be rewarded for their moral behavior--social conformity and adherence to moral proscriptions--but they do expect to be punished for deviating or disobeying. Not surprisingly, the Social Order motive is associated with high scores on right-wing authoritarianism (Altmeyer, 1981) and social dominance (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994) and with political conservatism (Janoff-Bulman, Sheikh, & Baldacci, under review).

The Social Justice motive involves a very different set of communal obligations involving the motivation to provide for others and to help others in the community advance and is associated with efforts to insure greater economic and material support and often involves matters of opportunity, income, and equity.

Moral behavior from a Social Justice perspective is equivalent to contributing to the social welfare of others, and individuals expect to be rewarded for good behavior, but do not expect to be punished in the absence of this behavior. In contrast to the Social Order motive, Social Justice is associated with political liberalism and low scores on right-wing authoritarianism and social dominance (Janoff-Bulman & Sheikh, 2006; Janoff-Bulman, Sheikh, & Baldacci, under review). Both involve beliefs in social responsibility; however, Social Order is focused primarily on what we should not do and inhibitory behaviors so as to maintain a moral, ordered community, whereas Social Justice focuses primarily on what we should do and activation behaviors in promoting a moral, just society.

Although the model of moral motivations gives an outline of the approach-avoidance distinction in terms of self and other domains, a focus on the approach-avoidance distinction itself is necessary to aid in understanding the *motivational* aspects of morality. The self-other categories are important in distinguishing morals regarding oneself and morals regarding others, but applying self-regulatory mechanisms such as the approach-avoidance distinction in the moral domain helps uncover the psychological motivations underlying morality. Although the above has elaborated upon the motivational aspects of moral behaviors, this study will be looking at moral judgments as a means to understand the two motivational moral systems. This project's main purpose was to uncover the differences between moral judgments that concern inhibiting negative behaviors versus moral judgments that concern activating positive behaviors, with the goal of understanding the motivational bases of morality.

## Personal Preference in Moral Judgments

A second aim of the project was to utilize the approach-avoidance motivational distinction to better understand moral judgments. Morality is typically regarded as concerning prescriptive behaviors that are universal in nature; moral philosopher Hare (1981) argued that morality is a guide to behavior that is viewed by an individual as overriding and that he or she wants to be universally adopted. This is best exemplified in Kant's (1785) first formulation of his categorical imperative, "Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it would become a universal law." Here, morality does not refer to just any guide to behavior accepted by an individual; morality is not just a personal code of conduct. It is a specific guide to behavior that the individual adopts as an overriding guide and wants everyone else to adopt as their overriding guide as well. In this sense, morality has few limitations on content; an individual can view virtually any issue as a moral issue--a matter of right versus wrong—instead of a personal preference. Even Higgins (1998), in placing morality within his prevention focus, conceptualizes morality as an obligation and not a matter of personal preference. However, is there room for personal preference in morality?

According to our framework of morality, a categorical distinction between moral issues and personal preference may be more complex than previously articulated. Avoidance-oriented morals, those that involve inhibition and restraint from immoral behaviors should involve the traditionally viewed notion of morality as absence of personal preference. For example, if one views stealing as immoral, then one should feel that restraining from stealing is mandatory, in other words, *not* a

personal preference. However, this may not necessarily be the case for approach-oriented morals, those that involve activation of positive, moral behaviors. Here, for example, if one views helping a charity organization as moral, this would not necessarily mean that it is mandatory to help a charity organization (i.e., not a personal preference), but that one *should* help or that it would be good to do so. Approach-oriented morals, concerning more ideal (in line with Higgins' conception of the promotion system as concerning ideal behaviors) and positive behaviors may not be categorically mandatory in the same sense as the avoidance-oriented morals. Previous research (e.g., Lovett, 2005; Haidt, 1993) has measured moral judgments utilizing different items ranging from asking questions concerning personal preference to the extent to which participants approve or disapprove of a situation or how much they think a behavior should or should not be done. Understanding the differences between these judgments would aid researchers in knowing what these judgments mean. Overall, an exploratory purpose of the project was to study any inherent differences between moral judgments regarding approach- and avoidance-oriented morals.

### Study Purposes

The study had two objectives. The first was to experimentally test the extent to which different conceptions of morality reflect differences in approach-avoidance motivation, to better understand the role of self-regulation in morality. Specifically, there were three hypotheses: (1) Approach motives will positively predict approach-oriented morals; here, (a) priming an approach motivation will increase sensitivity to approach-oriented morals (for example, helping a charity organization), and (b) a

dispositional sensitivity to approach motives will increase sensitivity to approach-oriented morals. (2) Avoidance motives will positively predict avoidance-oriented morals; here, (a) priming an avoid motivation will increase sensitivity to avoidance-oriented morals (for example, restraining from drinking heavily), and (b) a dispositional sensitivity to avoidance motives will increase sensitivity to avoidance-oriented morals. (3) There will be an interaction effect, such that those in the approach-priming condition and particularly sensitive to positive outcomes (high on dispositional approach) will indicate the greatest sensitivity to the approach-oriented morals, and those in the avoidance-priming condition and particularly sensitive to negative outcomes (high on dispositional avoidance) will indicate greatest sensitivity to the avoidance-oriented morals. Given that the approach and avoidance motivations have been regarded as distinct and unrelated, we expected no significant relationship between an avoidance motivation and approach-oriented morals or an approach motivation and avoidance-oriented morals.

The second purpose was exploratory and focused on the relationship between conceptions of morality and personal preference. We aimed to explore this issue by comparing two different types of reactions, specifically the extent to which an individual feels one *should* perform a behavior compared to the extent to which s/he feels the behavior *is* or *is not a matter of personal preference*. Degree of congruence between these two ratings was also be explored in terms of individuals' approach-avoidance orientations, both as a personality variable and a situational variable. These preliminary comparisons would hopefully help us better understand the nature and components of moral judgments.

## CHAPTER II

### METHOD AND RESULTS

#### Method

##### Participants

A total of 170 participants were recruited from the undergraduate psychology participant pool. Six participants were removed from the analyses for inconsistent and unpredictable answers on the priming measure (such as rating all the negative events “very positively”). The remaining 164 participants consisted of 140 women (85.4%) and 24 men (14.6%). The majority of participants were White (65.2%), with Asian (14.6%), Black (9.1%), and Latino/Hispanic (5.5%) as the other respondents.

##### Materials

BAS and BIS Scales: Carver and White’s (1994) Behavioral Activation System and Behavioral Inhibition System scales (see Appendix A) were used to assess predisposed sensitivity to approach and avoidance motivations, respectively. The scale was developed from Gray’s (1970) work on two basic motivational systems responsible for behavior and affect, one labeled the *behavioral activation system* (BAS), an approach motivation, and the other labeled the *behavioral inhibition system* (BIS), an avoidance motivation. The instructions are as follows: “For each of the following statements, please indicate how much you agree with the statement. Please provide a rating from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree).” The BAS Scale has a total of 13 items; a sample item on the BAS scale is, “When I want something, I usually go all-out to get it.” The BIS Scale has 7 items; an example item is, “Criticism or scolding hurts me quite a bit.” Scores on the BAS are aggregated

and scores on the BIS are aggregated to get two discrete BAS and BIS total scores for an individual.

Life-Events Scale: This priming task was developed specifically for the study due to a lack of relevant priming techniques in the self-regulation literature and was used as a between-subjects manipulation. The format of the Life-Events Scale was modeled after priming techniques used by Higgins (e.g., 1998), but included more items and an additional (control) condition. The Life-Events Scale (see Appendix B, C, and D) has three conditions: an approach motivation condition, an avoidance motivation condition, and a control condition. In each condition, participants respond to 10 future outcome items. In the approach condition, participants first respond to the valence of each item such as “Please rate how *positive* or *negative* financial security is,” with a 7-point scale with endpoints 1 = “very negative” and 7 = “very positive.” Then they are prompted to “think about behaviors that contribute to *financial security*. If you want to have financial security, these are behaviors you will want to achieve. Please list three of these below.” The equivalent item in the avoidance condition asks participants to “Please rate how *positive* or *negative* serious financial debt is” on a 7-point scale and then to “think about behaviors that contribute to *serious financial debt*. If you don’t want to have serious financial debt, these are behaviors you will want to avoid. Please list three of these below.” The control condition includes half of the items from the approach condition and half of the items from the avoidance condition, but asks how “positively/negatively do you view *financial security*?” on the same 7-point scale and asks the participants “why?” to make participants in each condition perform equivalent amounts of writing.

Moralisms Scale: This is a 24-item scale that incorporates items representing each of the four cells of the proposed model of moral motivations: Self-Restraint, Self-Reliance, Social Order, and Social Justice (see Appendix E). Each item consists of a scenario in which the target person is deciding whether to engage in a particular behavior. Participants are asked to make two types of ratings: First, they rate the extent to which they view the scenario to be a matter of personal preference, from 1 (*“not at all a matter of personal preference”*) to 9 (*“completely a matter of personal preference”*). Second, participants rate the extent to which they believe the subject in the scenario should or should not perform the behavior, from 1 (*“feel very strongly he/she should not”*) to 9 (*“feel very strongly he/she should”*), where 5 is the midpoint (*“neutral”*). These are called the Moralisms Preference subscale and the Moralisms Evaluation subscale, respectively.

There are six scenarios for every cell in the model. Each scenario focuses on a specific behavior; the avoidance-oriented morals focus on the inhibition of a negative behavior, whereas the approach-oriented morals focus on the activation of a positive behavior. The following are examples of avoidance-oriented items from the Moralisms scale: “Laura is out with friends at a bar, and a friend will be driving her home. Laura is finishing her fifth bottle of beer, which she certainly feels, and is thinking of ordering a sixth bottle” (Self-Restraint); “Sheila is going to a funeral, and it’s an unusually hot day. She is thinking of wearing a skimpy, revealing dress to keep her relatively cool at the funeral” (Social Order). The following two are examples of approach-oriented items from the Moralisms scale: “Jill is applying for a competitive year-long internship. Her uncle knows someone at the firm that is offering the



internship. Jill could ask her uncle to pull strings for her, but she considers instead working hard on her application and trying to get the position on her own merits” (Self-Reliance); “While on campus, Jay is approached by a student asking if he could volunteer two hours this weekend to help with a food drive for the local survival center. Jay doesn’t have plans for the weekend. Jay is deciding whether to commit himself to helping with the food drive” (Social Justice).

Because the present study focused on the approach versus avoidance motivational distinction, Self-Reliance and Social Justice were aggregated to form the Approach Preference subscale and the Approach Evaluation subscale, while Self-Restraint and Social Order were aggregated to form the Avoidance Preference subscale and the Avoidance Evaluation subscale. The internal reliabilities for the Approach Preference and Avoidance Preference subscales were  $\alpha = .81$  and  $\alpha = .78$ , respectively. The internal reliabilities for the Approach Evaluation and Avoidance Evaluation subscales were  $\alpha = .63$  and  $\alpha = .76$ , respectively. Providing support for focusing on the broad motivational distinction, the reliabilities for each of the two approach and avoidance subscales (preference and evaluation) were higher than the reliabilities of their composite subscales (see Appendix E). In addition, an exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation showed two factors that were equivalent to the Approach Evaluation and Approach Preference subscales. Results reported concerned the motivational distinction, but it should be noted that analyses showed the same patterns within each cell of the approach (Self-Restraint and Social Order) and avoidance (Self-Reliance and Social Justice) subscales, so that it was not

one cell of the model that accounted for the findings, but the overall motivational subscales.

Contemporary Social Issues Scale: This scale assesses the extent to which participants approve or disapprove of the following 13 contemporary social issues: legal abortion, affirmative action in college admissions, embryonic stem cell research, an environmental tax on SUV's and luxury cars, capital punishment / death penalty, pornography on the internet, government welfare programs for the poor, tax cuts for the rich, teaching creationism in the classroom, gay marriage, prayer in public schools, gun control, and public funding for day care (see Appendix F). Participants indicate their extent of approval/disapproval on 7-point scales with endpoints 1 = "do not approve at all" and 7 = "approve completely." Four items were reversed scored so that "approval" of all of the issues went in the liberal direction (e.g., "tax cuts for the rich" was reverse scored). For this study, item 6 (pornography on the internet) was eliminated because the Moralisms scale also contains an item concerning pornography.

An exploratory Factor Analysis was conducted with varimax rotation, and 10 items loaded on two factors. The first factor (Traditional Values Issues,  $\alpha = .661$ ) addressed lifestyle and traditional value issues (legal abortion, embryonic stem cell research, teaching creationism in the classroom, gay marriage, prayer in public schools). The second factor (Social Equity Issues,  $\alpha = .520$ ) addressed equity and economic issues (an environmental tax on SUV's and luxury cars, capital punishment/death penalty, government welfare programs for the poor, gun control,

public funding for day care). Again, higher scores on both scales indicated a more liberal position.

Political Orientation: Four items measuring liberalism-conservatism within the contemporary American political landscape were averaged to form a political orientation score for each participant (see Skitka, Bauman, & Sargis, 2005).

Respondents were asked to indicate where they would place themselves on two 7-point scales, one with endpoints 1 = “Very Liberal” and 7 = “Very Conservative” and the other with endpoints 1 = “Strong Democrat” and 7 = “Strong Republican.”

Participants were also asked, “How much do you tend to like or dislike political conservatives?” and “How much do you tend to like or dislike political liberals?”

Participants answered on 7-point scales with endpoints 1 = “dislike extremely” and 7 = “like extremely.” These four items were combined (after reverse-scoring the item about disliking/liking liberals) to provide a single measure of Political Orientation ( $\alpha = .74$ ) with higher numbers indicating greater political conservatism.

#### Procedure

After signing a consent form, participants completed the BIS/BAS scales and were randomly assigned to one of the three priming conditions of the Life Events Scale. After the priming measure, subjects then completed the Moralisms scale, followed by the Contemporary Social Issues scale, and, lastly, a brief demographics questionnaire. They were debriefed and thanked for participating in the study.

#### Results

Major Study Variables: Priming Conditions, the BAS Scale, and the BIS Scale

Means and standard deviations as well as the correlations for all study variables are reported in Tables 1 and 2, respectively. To test the major hypotheses of the study, a series of multiple regression analyses were conducted for the four major outcome variables (Approach Preference, Avoidance Preference, Approach Evaluation, and Avoidance Evaluation); the results of the multiple regressions can be seen in a set of tables in Appendix G. The predictor variables were centered to minimize issues of multicollinearity and priming condition, a categorical variable, was dummy coded for the regression analyses. The first regression was run to test the predictive value of priming condition, the BAS scale, and their interaction on Approach Preference. No significant main effects or interactions were found. The second regression was run with the same predictor variables and Approach Evaluation as the outcome variable. Here, a main effect for the BAS Scale was found ( $\beta = .289, p < .001$ ). There was no significant main effect of condition or condition interaction. Two regressions were also run using Avoidance Preference and Avoidance Evaluation as outcome variables, and as predicted, no significant effects emerged.

The next set of regressions was run to test the predictive value of priming condition, the BIS scale, and their interaction term. These predictor variables were first run in an interaction regression with Avoidance Preference. No main effects or interactions were found. The variables were run again in an interaction regression with the Avoidance Evaluation subscale and no main effects or interactions were found. Lastly, two regressions were also run using Approach Preference and

Approach Evaluation as outcome variables, and as predicted, no significant effects emerged.

#### Exploring Political Orientation

Since the BIS Scale did not predict the Moralisms Avoidance subscales, given past associations between political conservatism and avoidance motivation (Janoff-Bulman, Sheikh, & Baldacci, 2007), we decided to investigate the role of political orientation as a stand-in for a dispositional measure of inhibition. First, a multiple regression was conducted with priming condition, political orientation, and their interaction term on Avoidance Preference. No main effects or interactions were found. The same predictor variables were put into an interaction regression with Avoidance Evaluation. A marginally significant main effect was found for political orientation ( $\beta = -.235, p=.07$ ) with greater conservatism associated with stronger “should not” ratings. A regression with priming condition, political orientation, and their interaction term were used to predict Approach Preference. Political Orientation significantly predicted ratings on Approach Preference ( $\beta = .290, p=.05$ ), with conservatism associated with beliefs in greater personal preference on the approach-oriented items. There were no other main effects or interactions. Lastly, the same predictor variables were put into an interaction regression with Approach Evaluation, and no significant main effects or interactions found.

The relationship between political perspective and moral judgments were further apparent when utilizing the Contemporary Social Issues scales. Both the Traditional Values Issues and the Social Equity Issues were positively correlated with political orientation ( $r = -.294, p<.001$  and  $r = -.373, p<.001$ , respectively); here,

since both scales were scored in the “liberal” direction, both were negatively associated with the Political Orientation measure, which was scored in the conservative direction. However, Approach Evaluation was strongly associated with only the Social Equity Issues ( $r = .229, p = .004$ ) and Avoidance Evaluation was strongly associated with only the Traditional Values Issues ( $r = .193, p = .02$ ). Neither Approach Preference nor Avoidance Preference correlated with either Contemporary Social Issues scale (see Table 2).

#### Preference versus Evaluation

To understand the two types of moral judgments assessed, analyses were conducted comparing the Moralisms Preference subscale and the Moralisms Evaluation subscale. In order to make Approach Evaluation and Avoidance Evaluation comparable, converted scores were computed by subtracting 5 (the center of the scale) from the Approach Evaluation scores and subtracting the Avoidance Evaluation scores from 5. Converted scores were not computed for the Preference subscales given their comparability for both approach and avoidance items.

Overall, participants had lower scores on Avoidance Preference ( $M=6.39, SD=1.35$ ) than Approach Preference ( $M=7.24, SD=1.15$ ),  $t(163)=-10.01, p<.001$ , suggesting that the avoidance items were seen as less of a personal preference than the approach items (or approach items were seen as more of a personal preference). On the Moralisms Evaluation scale, however, participants had higher scores on Approach Evaluation ( $M = 2.17, SD = .72$ ) than on Avoidance Evaluation ( $M = 1.92, SD = 1.05$ ),  $t(163)=2.79, p=.006$ . Here, participants had higher ratings on “feel very

strongly he/she should” for the approach items than “feel very strongly he/she should not” for the avoidance items.

To compare the two measures of moral judgments (“personal preference” and “should/should not”), correlations were run between the Moralisms Preference subscales and the Moralisms Evaluation subscales. A significant correlation between participants’ ratings of Avoidance Preference and Avoidance Evaluation was found ( $r=.154, p=.049$ ). Thus, for the avoidance subscales, rating items “*not at all a matter of personal preference*” positively correlated with “*feel very strongly he/she should not.*” However, no correlation was found between Approach Preference and Approach Evaluation ( $r=-.036, p=ns$ ). For the approach subscales, rating items “*not at all a matter of personal preference*” did not correlate with “*feel very strongly he/she should not.*” Two regression analyses were conducted to see if political orientation moderated this finding. Regressing Avoidance Evaluation onto Avoidance Preference, Political Orientation, and the interaction term, Avoidance Preference was the only significant predictor of Avoidance Evaluation ( $\beta = .120, p = .05$ ); there was no moderating influence of Political Orientation. No main effects or interactions were found when regressing Approach Evaluation onto Approach Preference, Political Orientation, and the interaction term.

## CHAPTER III

### DISCUSSION

The study explored the motivational distinction of approach and avoidance and the self-regulation of morality, in hopes of furthering our understanding of the psychological nature of morality. Although not all of the study hypotheses were confirmed, the findings nevertheless illustrate the complex nature of morality and the need to recognize motivational differences within the moral domain.

#### Findings and Implications of the Study: BAS and Political Orientation

Although the priming manipulation of the study failed (for further discussion, see below), distinct dispositional predictors of approach-oriented moral judgments and avoidance-oriented moral judgments were found in partial support of our hypotheses. The Behavioral Activation System's prediction of approach-oriented evaluations underscores their positive goal directedness and movement toward goals (Carver & White, 1994). This is consistent with our hypothesis that (in addition to the priming manipulation) an approach disposition, as measured by the BAS scale, would positively predict approach-oriented morals.

Unfortunately, the Behavior Inhibition System did not add any predictive value to the avoidance-oriented moral judgments in this study. Instead, political orientation worked partly as a stand-in for a measure of avoidance and inhibition. Although it should be noted that the results were not significant, political orientation did marginally predict avoidance-oriented evaluations. This finding is consistent with our own past research on political conservatism and morality (Janoff-Bulman, Sheikh, & Baldacci, under review), in which conservatism was positively associated with



avoidance-oriented morals (i.e., Self-Restraint and Social Order). Also, Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway (2003) have related the prevention system of Higgins's regulatory focus theory (1998) to political conservatism, arguing that political conservatives have a need for "cognitive closure" and are, thus, more likely to be prevention-focused. Political conservatism, therefore, seems to reflect an individual difference measure of an avoidance-oriented disposition (although it should be noted that we are not arguing that political conservatism is equivalent to the Behavioral Inhibition System); as such, it seems to provide some support for the study hypothesis that avoidance motivation would positively predict avoidance-oriented morals. Overall, the Behavior Activation System was the distinct predictor of judgments of Approach Evaluation whereas political conservatism marginally predicted judgments of Avoidance Evaluation.

In addition, political orientation predicted Approach Preference; conservatism was positively related to perceiving more of a personal preference on the approach-oriented items; here, liberals rated approach-oriented items as less a matter of personal preference. In addition to the above finding that conservatism predicted higher scores on avoidance-oriented morals, this finding illustrates that both liberals and conservatives make moral judgments (it is not that one political orientation is more "moral" than the other), but that these moral judgments in part follow approach- and avoidance-oriented distinctions. Greater conservatism predicted Avoidance Evaluation whereas greater liberalism predicted Approach Preference.

Other findings that further support the relationship between political orientation and moral judgments within a moral motivational framework concern the

Contemporary Social Issues scale. Approval of Traditional Values Issues, including items such as teaching creationism in the classroom, only predicted avoidance-oriented evaluations, whereas approval of Social Equity Issues, items such as government welfare programs for the poor, only predicted approach-oriented evaluations. Utilizing the motivational distinction, political issues were associated with judgments of uncertain, apolitical moral items such as those on the Moralisms scale. It should be noted that even by removing one or two of the items on the Moralisms scale that may have been interpreted as inherently either politically liberal or conservative (for example, the avoidance-oriented item: “Dana is cleaning out her closet and finds her old American flag. She has no need for the flag anymore, so she is thinking of cutting it up into small pieces that she can use as rags to clean her house”), the results remained significant.

#### Findings and Implications of the Study: Personal Preference and Evaluations

In addition to finding distinct predictors that illustrate the motivational distinction in the moral domain, findings support an argument for differences between the nature of approach-oriented morals and avoidance-oriented morals. Here, avoidance-oriented morals, morals that inhibit negative behaviors, are judged overall to be *less* of a personal preference. In addition, these judgments of avoidance-oriented personal preference were positively correlated with judgments of how much the actor in the Avoidance Moralisms vignettes *should not* engage in the negative behavior. Thus, the actor *should not* engage in the negative behavior and it is *not a matter of personal preference* were positively associated judgments.

However, judgments regarding approach-oriented morals, morals that activate positive behaviors, did not display the same pattern. Here, judgments of how much the actor in the Approach Moralisms vignettes *should* engage in the positive behavior were significantly higher than judgments of how much the actor in the Avoidance Moralisms vignettes *should not* engage in the negative behavior. However, there was no relationship between these *should* judgments and judgments of *personal preference* for the approach-oriented morals. Apparently the participants believed strongly that the actor *should* engage in the positive behavior, but that it is also largely a matter of personal preference. Overall, the avoidance-oriented morals were judged as *less* of a personal preference, but the approach-oriented morals were judged *more harshly* on the evaluation scale (should). This is why we have reason to believe that moral judgments within the two motivational domains are qualitatively different; when avoidance-oriented items are thought to be moral, they are judged as more mandatory (i.e., *not a matter of personal preference*), whereas when approach-oriented morals are judged as moral, they are considered more discretionary.

### Limitations

The major limitation and methodological concern of the study was the failure of the Life Events Scale priming task. Although participants filled out the Life Events Scale correctly, writing positive events that would help them achieve the positive goal in the approach condition and negative events that would help with avoid the negative event in the avoidance condition, there was no effect of priming condition on the judgments subjects made on either the Approach or Avoidance Moralisms subscales. There are several possible methodological as well as

theoretical reasons for this null effect. First, in the Life Events Scale subjects were asked in the avoidance priming condition to “think about behaviors that contribute to *serious financial debt*. If you don’t want to have serious financial debt, these are behaviors you will want to avoid. Please list three of these below.” Perhaps by writing down what they “would not” do in order to avoid the negative outcome, participants were no longer in an avoidant state because they resolved how to avoid that particular negative outcome. Second, the priming may not have worked in the moral domain due to the strength of participants’ pre-existing moral belief systems, which the priming measure may not have been able to override. This may explain why the personality measures (the BAS and the political orientation measure) were largely successful in predicting the appropriate Approach or Avoidance Moralisms subscale, whereas the priming conditions were not.

The Behavioral Inhibition System was not a strong predictor of any moral judgments, nor was it related to any other measures. A proposed reason for the BIS Scale’s lack of predictive value in this project is that it may measure level of anxiety more than dispositional inhibition. Items such as “I worry about making mistakes” and “I feel pretty worried or upset when I think or know somebody is angry at me” (Carver & White, 1994) tap anxiety that might lead to inhibitory behaviors. However, avoidance-oriented morals may not necessarily be related to anxiety; holding inhibitory-based morals, such as the ones tapped by the Avoidance Moralisms subscale, may conceptually decrease anxiety, but this does not mean that subjects are generally anxious individuals. The BAS, however, having several

subcomponents such as the “BAS Reward Responsiveness,” the “BAS Drive,” and the “BAS Fun-seeking” covers a range of activation behaviors.

In addition to the above limitations of the study, another concerns conclusions that can be drawn from the Moralisms scale. Since the items were constructed by the experimenters, any differences found between the approach-oriented morals and the avoidance-oriented morals may be due to the specific items chosen for the scale. It should be noted that the Moralisms scale was constructed to contain a range of morally ambiguous items that would not be inherently related to the predictor variables or reflect strong moral norms such as stealing or helping a family member; regardless, any conclusions drawn from the differences between approach- and avoidance-oriented morals in this study can currently only apply to the specific set of items comprising the Moralisms scale. Future work on the motivational distinction within the moral domain should go beyond the Moralisms scale and look at respondents’ own moral beliefs in terms of activation and inhibition, as well as the relationship between matters of personal preference and the extent to which one should/should not act according to that belief. This would be one way to ensure that the study’s findings can be applied more broadly, to morals beyond the items constructed for the Moralisms scale.

### Conclusion

Morality is represented though individuals within a social existence; recent work in social and cultural psychology (e.g., Miller, Bersoff, & Harwood, 1990; Shweder, 1991a; Shweder, Mahapatra, & Miller, 1987; Shweder & Sullivan, 1993) has shown the distinctly social dimensions of moral cognitions and affect. From this

project, we hoped to emphasize the psychological differences between the positive and the negative in morality. Findings regarding the distinction between what we *should* do and what we *should not* do have broader societal connections; the American legal system is based primarily on regulating inhibitory behaviors, making what we should not do mandatory. However, much activation-based moral behaviors are not regulated in this manner; actions involving altruism, charity, and prosocial behaviors are not mandatory, but are viewed as ideal. Both are viewed as moral, but in different ways, and both appear to be regulated differently, both at the individual and societal level.

Overall, the study supports drawing a motivational distinction within morality—between approach and avoidance, promotion and prevention, activation and inhibition-- to more fully understand how individuals conceptualize morality. From this perspective, the study of morality can be expanded from its historically developmental focus in psychology, and new questions concerning the manner in which self-regulation influences one's morals can be addressed.

Table 1

## Means and Standard Deviations of the Moralisms Subscales

Scale	Mean	SD	$\alpha$
Approach Preference	7.24	1.16	.81
Avoidance Preference	6.39	1.35	.78
Approach Evaluation	2.17	.72	.63
Avoidance Evaluation	1.92	1.05	.76

*Note.* Approach Preference, Avoidance Preference, Approach Evaluation, Avoidance Evaluations are subscales of the Moralisms Scale. Approach Evaluation and the Avoidance Evaluations represent the respective computed scores.

Table 2

## Correlations of Moralisms Subscales With Other Measures

	2)	3)	4)	5)	6)	7)	8)	9)
1) BAS Scale	.12	.03	.10	.03	.26**	.08	.05	-.003
2) BIS Scale		.04	.02	-.02	.13	.06	.11	.003
3) Political Orientation			.15	-.07	.02	.14	-.37**	-.29*
4) Approach Preference				.63**	-.04	.09	-.12	-.13
5) Avoidance Preference					-.01	-.15*	.01	-.01
6) Approach Evaluation						.16*	.23**	-.08
7) Avoidance Evaluation							-.11	-.19*
8) Social Equity Issues								.15

*Note.* Approach Preference, Avoidance Preference, Approach Evaluation, Avoidance Evaluations are subscales of the Moralisms Scale. Approach Evaluation and the Avoidance Evaluations represent the respective calculated computed scores.

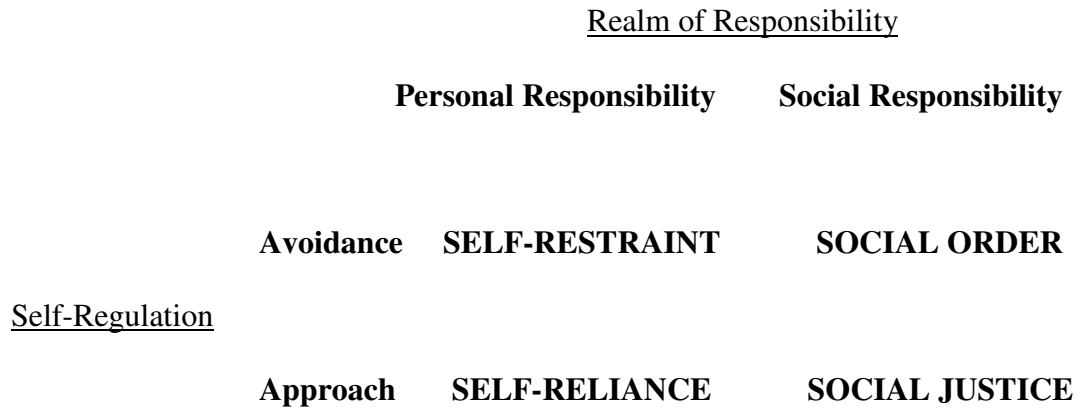
9) = Traditional Values Issues

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .



FIGURE 1

Model of Moral Motivations



## APPENDIX A

### BIS/BAS SCALES

For each of the following statements, please indicate **how much you agree with the statement**. Please provide a rating from **1 to 4**, using the following scale:

1	2	3	4
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree

#### BIS Scale

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. If I think something unpleasant is going to happen I usually get pretty “worked up”.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. I worry about making mistakes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Criticism or scolding hurts me quite a bit.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. I feel pretty worried or upset when I think or know somebody is angry at me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Even if something bad is about to happen to me, I rarely experience fear or nervousness.\*
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I feel worried when I think I have done something poorly.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. I have very few fears compared to my friends.\*

#### BAS Reward Responsiveness

- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. When I get something I want, I feel excited and energized.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. When I’m doing well at something, I love to keep at it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. When good things happen to me, it affects me strongly.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. It would excite me to win a contest.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. When I see an opportunity for something I like, I get excited right away.

#### BAS Drive

- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. When I want something, I usually go all-out to get it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. I go out of my way to get things I want.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. If I see a chance to get something I want, I move on it right away.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. When I go after something I use a “no holds barred” approach.

#### BAS Fun Seeking

- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. I will often do things for no other reason than that they might be fun.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. I crave excitement and new sensations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. I’m always willing to try something new if I think it will be fun.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. I often act on the spur of the moment.

\*Reverse Scored.

## APPENDIX B

### LIFE EVENTS SCALE AVOIDANCE CONDITION

We are interested in how college students think about and plan for the future events in their lives. In particular, we are exploring students' consideration of negative future events and their thoughts about strategies for avoiding these negative outcomes.

Listed below are **negative** outcomes that could happen to you over the next few years. First rate each outcome and then list **three negative behaviors** you intend to **avoid** so you minimize the likelihood of the negative outcome. You may find it hard to come up with three behaviors for each negative outcome, but there are no wrong answers, so please do your best.

#### Serious financial debt

Please rate how **positive** or **negative** serious financial debt is:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>very negative</i>	<i>negative</i>	<i>somewhat negative</i>	<i>slightly negative</i>	<i>neutral</i>	<i>slightly positive</i>	<i>somewhat positive</i>	<i>positive</i>	<i>very positive</i>

Now think about behaviors that contribute to **serious financial debt**. If you don't want to have serious financial debt, these are behaviors you will want to avoid. Please list three of these below.

To **avoid** serious financial debt:

**I would not:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I would not:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I would not:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### A bad break-up with a long-term dating partner

Please rate how **positive** or **negative** a bad break-up with a long-term dating partner is:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>very negative</i>	<i>negative</i>	<i>somewhat negative</i>	<i>slightly negative</i>	<i>neutral</i>	<i>slightly positive</i>	<i>somewhat positive</i>	<i>positive</i>	<i>very positive</i>

Now think about behaviors that contribute to **a bad break-up with a long-term dating partner**. If you don't want to have a bad break-up, these are behaviors you will want to avoid. Please list three of these below.

To **avoid** a bad break-up with a long-term dating partner:

**I would not:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I would not:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I would not:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Failing a difficult course**

Please rate how **positive** or **negative** failing a difficult course is:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>very</i>	<i>negative</i>	<i>somewhat</i>	<i>slightly</i>	<i>neutral</i>	<i>slightly</i>	<i>somewhat</i>	<i>positive</i>	<i>very</i>
<i>negative</i>		<i>negative</i>	<i>negative</i>		<i>positive</i>	<i>positive</i>		<i>positive</i>

Now think about behaviors that contribute to **failing a difficult course**. If you don't want to fail a difficult course, these are behaviors you will want to avoid. Please list three of these below.

To **avoid** failing a difficult course:

**I would not:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I would not:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I would not:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Doing terribly at an important job interview**

Please rate how **positive** or **negative** doing terribly at an important job interview is:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>very</i>	<i>negative</i>	<i>somewhat</i>	<i>slightly</i>	<i>neutral</i>	<i>slightly</i>	<i>somewhat</i>	<i>positive</i>	<i>very</i>
<i>negative</i>		<i>negative</i>	<i>negative</i>		<i>positive</i>	<i>positive</i>		<i>positive</i>

Now think about behaviors that contribute to **doing terribly at an important job interview**. If you don't want to do terribly at an important job interview, these are behaviors you will want to avoid. Please list three of these below.

To **avoid** doing terribly at an important job interview:

**I would not:** \_\_\_\_\_

I would not: \_\_\_\_\_

I would not: \_\_\_\_\_

**Having a very serious illness**

Please rate how **positive** or **negative** having a very serious illness is:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>very</i>	<i>negative</i>	<i>somewhat</i>	<i>slightly</i>	<i>neutral</i>	<i>slightly</i>	<i>somewhat</i>	<i>positive</i>	<i>very</i>
<i>negative</i>		<i>negative</i>	<i>negative</i>		<i>positive</i>	<i>positive</i>		<i>positive</i>

Now think about behaviors that contribute to **having a very serious illness**. If you don't want to have a very serious illness, these are behaviors you will want to avoid. Please list three of these below.

To **avoid** having a very serious illness:

I would not: \_\_\_\_\_

I would not: \_\_\_\_\_

I would not: \_\_\_\_\_

**Losing contact with your good friends**

Please rate how **positive** or **negative** losing contact with your good friends is:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>very</i>	<i>negative</i>	<i>somewhat</i>	<i>slightly</i>	<i>neutral</i>	<i>slightly</i>	<i>somewhat</i>	<i>positive</i>	<i>very</i>
<i>negative</i>		<i>negative</i>	<i>negative</i>		<i>positive</i>	<i>positive</i>		<i>positive</i>

Now think about behaviors that contribute to **losing contact with your good friends**. If you don't want to lose contact with your good friends, these are behaviors you will want to avoid. Please list three of these below.

To **avoid** losing contact with your good friends:

I would not: \_\_\_\_\_

I would not: \_\_\_\_\_

I would not: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Being unemployed**

Please rate how **positive** or **negative** being unemployed is:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>very</i>	<i>negative</i>	<i>somewhat</i>	<i>slightly</i>	<i>neutral</i>	<i>slightly</i>	<i>somewhat</i>	<i>positive</i>	<i>very</i>
<i>negative</i>		<i>negative</i>	<i>negative</i>		<i>positive</i>	<i>positive</i>		<i>positive</i>

Now think about behaviors that contribute to **being unemployed**. If you don't want to be unemployed, these are behaviors you will want to avoid. Please list three of these below.

To **avoid** being unemployed:

**I would not:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I would not:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I would not:** \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX C

### LIFE EVENTS SCALE APPROACH CONDITION

We are interested in how college students think about and plan for the future events in their lives. In particular, we are exploring students' consideration of positive future events and their thoughts about strategies for achieving these positive outcomes.

Listed below are **positive** outcomes that could happen to you over the next few years. First rate each outcome and then list **three positive behaviors** you intend to **engage** in so you maximize the likelihood of the positive outcome. You may find it hard to come up with three behaviors for each positive outcome, but there are no wrong answers, so please do your best.

#### **Financial security**

Please rate how **positive** or **negative** financial security is:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
very negative	negative	somewhat negative	slightly negative	neutral	slightly positive	somewhat positive	positive	very positive

Now think about behaviors that contribute to **financial security**. If you want to have financial security, these are behaviors you will want to achieve. Please list three of these below.

To **achieve** financial security:

**I would:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I would:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I would:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Having an excellent relationship with a long-term dating partner**

Please rate how **positive** or **negative** having an excellent relationship with a long-term dating partner is:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
very negative	negative	somewhat negative	slightly negative	neutral	slightly positive	somewhat positive	positive	very positive

Now think about behaviors that contribute to **having an excellent relationship with a long-term dating partner**. If you want to have an excellent relationship, these are behaviors you will want to achieve. Please list three of these below.

To **achieve** having an excellent relationship with a long-term dating partner:

**I would:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I would:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I would:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Doing very well in a difficult course**

Please rate how **positive** or **negative** doing very well in a difficult course is:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>very</i>	<i>negative</i>	<i>somewhat</i>	<i>slightly</i>	<i>neutral</i>	<i>slightly</i>	<i>somewhat</i>	<i>positive</i>	<i>very</i>
<i>negative</i>		<i>negative</i>	<i>negative</i>		<i>positive</i>	<i>positive</i>		<i>positive</i>

Now think about behaviors that contribute to **doing very well in a difficult course**. If you want to do well in a difficult course, these are behaviors you will want to achieve. Please list three of these below.

To **achieve** doing very well in a difficult course:

**I would:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I would:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I would:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Doing very well at an important job interview**

Please rate how **positive** or **negative** doing very well at an important job interview is:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>very</i>	<i>negative</i>	<i>somewhat</i>	<i>slightly</i>	<i>neutral</i>	<i>slightly</i>	<i>somewhat</i>	<i>positive</i>	<i>very</i>
<i>negative</i>		<i>negative</i>	<i>negative</i>		<i>positive</i>	<i>positive</i>		<i>positive</i>

Now think about behaviors that contribute to **doing very well at an important job interview**. If you want to do well at an important job interview, these are behaviors you will want to achieve. Please list three of these below.

To **achieve** doing very well at an important job interview:

**I would:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I would:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I would:** \_\_\_\_\_



### **Staying healthy and fit**

Please rate how **positive** or **negative** staying healthy and fit is:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>very</i>	<i>negative</i>	<i>somewhat</i>	<i>slightly</i>	<i>neutral</i>	<i>slightly</i>	<i>somewhat</i>	<i>positive</i>	<i>very</i>
<i>negative</i>		<i>negative</i>	<i>negative</i>		<i>positive</i>	<i>positive</i>		<i>positive</i>

Now think about behaviors that contribute to **staying healthy and fit**. If you want to stay healthy and fit, these are behaviors you will want to achieve. Please list three of these below.

To **achieve** staying healthy and fit:

**I would:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I would:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I would:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Staying close to your good friends**

Please rate how **positive** or **negative** staying close to your good friends is:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>very</i>	<i>negative</i>	<i>somewhat</i>	<i>slightly</i>	<i>neutral</i>	<i>slightly</i>	<i>somewhat</i>	<i>positive</i>	<i>very</i>
<i>negative</i>		<i>negative</i>	<i>negative</i>		<i>positive</i>	<i>positive</i>		<i>positive</i>

Now think about behaviors that contribute to **staying close to your friends**. If you want to stay close to your friends, these are behaviors you will want to achieve. Please list three of these below.

To **achieve** staying close to your friends:

**I would:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I would:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I would:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Having a good, secure job**

Please rate how **positive** or **negative** having a good, secure job is:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>very</i>	<i>negative</i>	<i>somewhat</i>	<i>slightly</i>	<i>neutral</i>	<i>slightly</i>	<i>somewhat</i>	<i>positive</i>	<i>very</i>
<i>negative</i>		<i>negative</i>	<i>negative</i>		<i>positive</i>	<i>positive</i>		<i>positive</i>

Now think about behaviors that contribute to **having a good, secure job**. If you want to have a good, secure job, these are behaviors you will want to achieve. Please list three of these below.

To **achieve** having a good, secure job:

**I would:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I would:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I would:** \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX D

### LIFE EVENTS SCALE CONTROL CONDITION

We are interested in how college students think about events in their lives. In particular, we are exploring students' consideration of future events and their thoughts about the nature (positive or negative) of these events.

Listed below are outcomes that could occur within the next 10-15 years. We would like you to rate the nature of each event on a scale of **1 (very negative) to 7 (very positive)**. Then write a sentence or two describing the reasons why you personally consider that outcome positive or negative.

#### **Financial security**

How positively/negatively do you view **financial security**?

very negative                      very positive  
1              2              3              4              5              6              7

Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### **A bad break-up with a long-term dating partner**

How positively/negatively do you view **a bad break-up with a long-term dating partner**?

very negative                      very positive  
1              2              3              4              5              6              7

Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### **Doing very well in a difficult course**

How positively/negatively do you view **doing very well in a difficult course**?

very negative                      very positive  
1              2              3              4              5              6              7

Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Doing terribly at an important job interview**

How positively/negatively do you view **doing terribly at an important job interview?**

very negative                      very positive  
1            2            3            4            5            6            7

Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Staying healthy and fit**

How positively/negatively do you view **staying healthy and fit?**

very negative                      very positive  
1            2            3            4            5            6            7

Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Losing contact with your good friends**

How positively/negatively do you view **losing contact with your good friends?**

very negative                      very positive  
1            2            3            4            5            6            7

Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Getting a promotion at work**

How positively/negatively do you view **getting a promotion at work**?

very negative

1

2

3

4

5

6

very positive

7

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Being unemployed**

How positively/negatively do you view **being unemployed**?

very negative

1

2

3

4

5

6

very positive

7

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX E MORALISMS SCALE

Some decisions are “up to you”---there isn’t a clear right or wrong answer, or a better or worse choice. One such decision might be choosing a flavor of ice cream. Such decisions are completely a matter of personal preference. Other decisions, such as killing an innocent person are clearly matters of right or wrong behavior and not matters of personal preference.

For each situations described below first indicate (i.e., circle the number) the degree to which you think the decision is **a matter of personal preference**. Then indicate **how strongly you feel** the person in the scenario **should or should not** engage in the behavior presented. There are no correct answers, so please just choose the number on the scales below that best represents your response

**To what extent do you think this is a matter of personal preference?**

*not at all a matter of  
personal preference*

*completely a matter of  
personal preference*

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9

**To what extent do you feel (the person in the scenario should or should not start looking for a job?**

*feel very strongly  
s/he should not*

*neutral*

*feel very strongly  
s/he should*

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9

## AVOIDANCE SUBSCALE

### **Self-Restraint items:**

(Preference subscale  $\alpha = .79$ , Evaluation subscale  $\alpha = .67$  )

Laura is out with friends at a bar, and a friend will be driving her home. Laura is finishing her fifth bottle of beer, which she certainly feels, and is thinking of ordering a sixth bottle.

Sam really likes pornography on the web. He already spent two hours earlier in the day on an online pornography site. He just returned to his apartment and considers immediately going online to a pornography website.

Tim is overweight and has already eaten two hamburgers and a large order of fries. He is full, but he really likes the onion rings at the restaurant, so he considers ordering a third burger and an order of onion rings.

Linda had a great time with Bob. When they go back to her apartment, it's clear she and Bob want to have sex. Neither of them have contraceptive protection, but they consider having sex anyway.

Brian loves to gamble and particularly likes going to the racetrack. He's been on a losing streak and knows he should quit his habit, but he just got his paycheck and considers going back to the track to gamble.

Sarah is getting more and more into debt with her credit card. She recently bought lots of expensive new clothes and costly furniture for her apartment. She could start saving her money but instead is thinking of buying a very expensive hi-definition TV and going into even deeper debt.

**Social Order items:**

(Preference subscale  $\alpha = .74$ , Evaluation subscale  $\alpha = .67$  )

Susan has a large friendly dog who likes to run free. There is a leash law in her town that states dogs should be leashed in public, but Susan is thinking of letting her dog run free on the bike trail in town.

Melanie and Scott have just bought a house in a quiet, middle-class neighborhood. The homes are not fancy, but are modest and well-kept. Melanie and Scott are considering ignoring the community and painting their house bright orange with green trim.

Sheila is going to a funeral, and it's an unusually hot day. She is thinking of wearing a skimpy, revealing dress to keep her relatively cool at the funeral.

Dana is cleaning out her closet and finds her old American flag. She has no need for the flag anymore, so she is thinking of cutting it up into small pieces that she can use as rags to clean her house.

Patricia is in a crowded nightclub and needs to go to the bathroom, although it's not an emergency. There is a long line for the women's bathroom but not for the men's, so Patricia considers using the men's bathroom.

Justin is a student artist and likes to paint graffiti in public areas, even though the city's policy prohibits it. He believes people like his work, and while waiting alone in a subway station, Justin considers painting some colorful graffiti on a blank wall in the station.

APPROACH SUBSCALE

**Self-Reliance items:**

(Preference subscale  $\alpha = .68$ , Evaluation subscale  $\alpha = .45$  )

Bob recently graduated from college and has moved back home with his parents. He could stay home and spend months without needing to look for a job, but instead considers looking for work immediately.

Chris needs one more math course to complete his college requirements. He is taking a math course that is much too easy for him, because he has already been taught all the material in another class. He considers taking a more difficult course that would challenge him and teach him something new.

Jill is applying for a competitive year-long internship. Her uncle knows someone at the firm that is offering the internship. Jill could ask her uncle to pull strings for her, but she considers instead working hard on her application and trying to get the position on her own merits.

Ellen moved to the city and is staying with a friend, who says she is welcome to stay until she finds her own apartment. Ellen's friend works long hours and is rarely at home. Ellen could just put off finding her own place to live, but considers looking for one as soon as she can.

Stacy is a pre-med student and has an early morning chemistry class. She intends to go to class, but finds it hard to get up early. She could just miss class and get the notes from other students, but considers waking up early anyway to get to class on time.

Jason has a big project to complete for an important client, and it is due by the end of the day. He knows he could give the work to two new interns, but he considers staying late and doing a good job finishing the project himself.

**Social Justice items:**

(Preference subscale  $\alpha = .73$ , Evaluation subscale  $\alpha = .53$ )

While on campus, Jay is approached by a student asking if he could volunteer two hours this weekend to help with a food drive for the local survival center. Jay doesn't have plans for the weekend. Jay is deciding whether to commit himself to helping with the food drive.

Neil and Allison are buying furniture for their new home. A local store with good prices is very convenient, but it is known that the store mistreats its employees, who are underpaid and given no benefits. Neil and Allison are considering driving some distance to a furniture store with similar prices that treats its employees fairly.

Ned inherited a lot of money and has cut back on work to manage his investments. He is approached by a foundation that has been successful at setting up job-training for the poor and is in need of additional funding. Ned is trying to decide whether to donate money for the foundation.



Brenda and Dan just finished an expensive dinner at a fine local restaurant. The bill is accurate, but is far more expensive than they thought it would be. The waiter was good. Brenda and Dan know they could just leave a small tip, but consider spending more money to give the waiter an appropriate larger amount.

Mary walks by a homeless man on the street, and he asks if she can spare some change. There's a local shelter that costs \$2.00 a night that Mary knows about. Mary could just walk past the homeless man, but considers giving him the \$2.00 instead.

Cory is in the supermarket, where he sees an elderly woman having trouble carrying her groceries. He is in a hurry and knows he could ignore her, but considers instead helping the elderly woman carry her groceries.

## APPENDIX F

### CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL ISSUES SCALES

Now please use the scale below to let us know what you think of each social issue.

<b>do not approve at all</b>							<b>approve completely</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	

\_\_\_\_\_ legal abortion

\_\_\_\_\_ affirmative action in college admissions

\_\_\_\_\_ embryonic stem cell research

\_\_\_\_\_ an environmental tax on SUV's and luxury cars

\_\_\_\_\_ capital punishment / death penalty

\_\_\_\_\_ pornography on the internet

\_\_\_\_\_ government welfare programs for the poor

\_\_\_\_\_ tax cuts for the rich

\_\_\_\_\_ teaching creationism in the classroom

\_\_\_\_\_ gay marriage

\_\_\_\_\_ prayer in public schools

\_\_\_\_\_ gun control

\_\_\_\_\_ public funding for day care

## APPENDIX G

### UNSTANDARDIZED REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS PREDICTING APPROACH PREFERENCE SUBSCALE AND APPROACH EVALUATION SUBSCALE

	APPROACH PREFERENCE		APPROACH EVALUATION	
	B	SE	B	SE
BAS	.333	.263	.591**	.157
Approach Condition	-.111	.222	.073	.133
Control Condition	.010	.229	.238	.137
BAS*Approach Condition	-.125	.668	-.138	.401
BAS*Control Condition	-.206	.639	-.517	.383

*Note.* B is the unstandardized regression coefficient. Betas for the approach condition and control condition refer to the difference between that group and the avoidance condition.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

UNSTANDARDIZED REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS PREDICTING  
AVOIDANCE PREFERENCE SUBSCALE AND AVOIDANCE EVALUATION  
SUBSCALE

	AVOIDANCE PREFERENCE		AVOIDANCE EVALUATION	
	B	SE	B	SE
BIS	-.004	.203	-.125	.153
Approach Condition	-.249	.258	-.139	.201
Control Condition	-.497	.265	-.314	.206
BIS*Approach Condition	-.090	.503	-.131	.392
BIS*Control Condition	-.163	.476	.271	.370

*Note.* B is the unstandardized regression coefficient. Betas for the approach condition and control condition refer to the difference between that group and the avoidance condition.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

UNSTANDARDIZED REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS PREDICTING  
AVOIDANCE PREFERENCE SUBSCALE AND AVOIDANCE EVALUATION  
SUBSCALE

	AVOIDANCE PREFERENCE		AVOIDANCE EVALUATION	
	B	SE	B	SE
Political Orientation	-.178	.171	-.242	.133
Approach Condition	-.217	.253	-.078	.198
Control Condition	-.511	.260	-.294	.203
PO*Approach Condition	-.590	.403	.235	.316
PO*Control Condition	-.801	.427	.352	.335

*Note.* PO = Political Orientation. B is the unstandardized regression coefficient. Betas for the approach condition and control condition refer to the difference between that group and the avoidance condition.  
\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

UNSTANDARDIZED REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS PREDICTING  
APPROACH PREFERENCE SUBSCALE AND APPROACH EVALUATION  
SUBSCALE

	APPROACH PREFERENCE		APPROACH EVALUATION	
	B	SE	B	SE
Political Orientation	.290*	.147	.004	.094
Approach Condition	-.156	.219	.006	.138
Control Condition	-.134	.225	.194	.142
PO*Approach Condition	-.274	.348	.286	.220
PO*Control Condition	-.573	.369	.334	.223

*Note.* PO = Political Orientation. B is the unstandardized regression coefficient. Betas for the approach condition and control condition refer to the difference between that group and the avoidance condition.  
\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

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